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DE RUEHUL #2990/01 2750816
ZNR UUUUU ZZH
O 020816Z OCT 07
FM AMEMBASSY SEOUL
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 6793
INFO RUEHBJ/AMEMBASSY BEIJING 3189
RUEHKO/AMEMBASSY TOKYO 3330
RUEHMO/AMEMBASSY MOSCOW 8271
RUEHIN/AIT TAIPEI 2219
RHMFISS/COMUSKOREA J5 SEOUL KOR
RHMFISS/COMUSKOREA SCJS SEOUL KOR
RHHMUNA/CDR USPACOM HONOLULU HI
RUEKJCS/SECDEF WASHINGTON DC//OSD/ISA/EAP//

UNCLAS SEOUL 002990

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E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [KN](#) [KS](#) [PGOV](#) [PREL](#)

SUBJECT: ROK-DPRK SUMMIT DAY 1: PAGEANTRY AND PEACE BUT NO
HUG

11. (U) Summary: President Roh walked for a few meters across the inter-Korean border and later met Kim Jong-il outside the House of Culture in Pyongyang, allaying the fears of some who feared that Kim would snub his South Korean counterpart on day one of the summit. The day's events were carried live on ROK television. The Blue House published a statement from Roh to "North Korean compatriots and Pyongyang citizens" on arrival in Pyongyang that stressed the importance of achieving peace. Roh's October 1 summit-eve speech also mentioned the need for denuclearization. Roh was to hold a meeting with DPRK President of the Supreme People's Assembly (titular head of state) Kim Yong-nam in the afternoon, with speculation about whether Kim Jong-il would attend a dinner hosted by Kim Yong-nam. End Summary.

12. (U) Border Crossing: President Roh Moo-hyun arrived at the Military Demarcation Line within the DMZ at 9 a.m. Before walking across the specially-painted yellow line, Roh said that the border had divided Koreans for too long and that he would "work hard to pave the way for peace and prosperity." He and First Lady Kwon Yang-sook then crossed the line and were greeted by Vice Director of the United Front Department, Choi Sung-Cheol, and North Hwanghae Provincial Party Committee Chief Secretary, Choi Ryong-hae, both said to be close to North Korean leader Kim Jong-il. The first couple, after shaking hands with the DPRK greeters and posing for pictures with two North Korean women in traditional Korean dress, proceeded by car to Pyongyang. News reports said that ROKG officials have already erected a stone monument to Roh's border crossing on the southern side of the DMZ, with the inscription, "The Road to Peace and Prosperity" in Roh's handwriting.

13. (U) Pyongyang Arrival: When he arrived in Pyongyang, Roh met DPRK President of the Supreme People's Assembly (titular head of state) Kim Yong-nam at the People's Cultural Palace and the two drove in an Mercedes limousine to the April 25 Cultural Hall. During the 20-minute drive, tens of thousands of Pyongyang citizens shouted "hurray" and "reunification of the fatherland" on the streets and waved identical red and white plastic flowers at the South Korean president, who waved back. (NOTE: In 2000, the North had also proposed to hold an open-car street parade for former Kim Dae-jung, but the South refused on security grounds. According to South Korean media reports, it is rare for the DPRK to hold an open-car street parade for a traveling foreign head of state -- the only known precedent is the open-car street parade for former Chinese leader Jiang Zemin in September 2001. END NOTE.)

14. (U) Kim Jong-il Greeting: Roh and Kim Yong-nam arrived at Pyongyang's House of Culture at 12 p.m., where Roh and First Lady Kwon Yang-sook shook hands with Kim Jong-il, dressed in a beige military jumpsuit. The ROK media expressed excitement when it became clear that Kim Jong-il would indeed greet Roh, but then noted that there was no hug, in contrast to Kim Jong-il's effusive 2000 greeting for Kim Dae-jung. Roh then joined Kim Jong-il in reviewing and then observing goose-stepping North Korean Army and Navy Honor Guards and greeting cheering North Koreans, as Kim Jong-il followed, clapping politely. Afterward, Roh proceeded to the Paekwawon Guest House, after which he was scheduled to meet with Kim Yong-nam, also the host of an October 2 dinner that Kim Jong-il may attend.

15. (U) Roh's Pyongyang comments: Upon Roh's arrival in Pyongyang, the Blue House website released a Presidential statement addressed to "North Korean compatriots and Pyongyang citizens," in which Roh said that South and North were "now walking side by side on a new path toward reconciliation and cooperation," and mentioned peace four times: "...The most crucial thing is peace. Our painful history has reminded us of the importance of peace. Now is the time for the South and North to join hands to establish a new history of peace. For the sake of peace on the Korean Peninsula, let us not postpone what should be done and let us put into practice what we can one by one..."

16. (U) Those remarks did not mention denuclearization, but Roh did so in his October 1 summit-eve speech. After saying that he intended to "concentrate on making substantive and concrete progress that will bring about a peace settlement together with economic development," Roh added, "The issues

of denuclearization and a peace regime on the Korean Peninsula cannot be ultimately resolved only through an agreement between the South and North...I will do what I can to the best of my ability in expediting the success of the Six-Party Talks and contributing to peace on the Korean Peninsula and in Northeast Asia." On economic cooperation, he said that international factors and a gap in understanding between North and South had to be overcome to allow accelerated economic cooperation. He added that he would try to hammer out an agreement on building military trust and addressing humanitarian matters.

17. (U) Editorial Reaction: October 2 editorials were in line with those during the weeks leading up to the summit. The progressive Hankyoreh newspaper offered cautious optimism: "It is appropriate that Roh wants to give talking about peace on the peninsula. Everything is at risk without a firm peace...The two leaders need to adopt a 'peace declaration' that expresses the intentions of both sides to create a peace regime." In contrast, the conservative Chosun Ilbo newspaper waved caution flags: "The problem is that it is difficult to pursue real peace that is backed by action and not be deluded by a deceptive peace packaged with seemingly plausible words...Peace is not achieved by the exchange of sweet words and flowers."

18. (SBU) Comment: South Korean commentators spent most of the morning speculating when, if at all, Kim Jong-il would show up. It was, therefore, a great relief when he greeted Roh around noon at the House of Culture. In his signature beige military jumpsuit, Kim looked healthy, though his waist-line had expanded somewhat compared with his most recent pictures. Yes, there is blanket TV and newspaper coverage of the visit, but nothing like the excitement and euphoria in connection with the first summit seven years ago.

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